



Quixote

by David
Marples

The recent symposium on cults raised some interesting questions and explained the features of some of the more prominent non-establishment religions, such as the Unification Church and the Krishna movement. Yet, as a participant in the forums, I wonder, in retrospect, whether the Reverends Clay and Larson ever came to terms with the most fundamental aspect of such discussions; namely the freedom of a person or group to propagate his/its beliefs, no matter whether they follow a pudgy East Indian Messiah, or the Man in the Moon (no pun intended).

The Reverend Clay, albeit an articulate and engaging speaker, never gave a clear definition of what constitutes a "cult". His concept of a "messianic leader with tremendous control", using his own Scriptures and operating on the basic premise that the outside world is satanic, might equally well be applied to early Christianity. An examination of some of the accusations levelled against the methods of the cults reveals that while some are groundless, others are aimed at tactics which have their origins in "mainstream" religions such as Judaism, Islam and Roman Catholicism.

Further, despite freak occasions such as Jonestown, no one is forced to join any new religious movement. The so-called "heavenly deception" whereby groups operating in public often disguise their true identity is annoying. Coercion, however, is not a factor in recruitment. I have had the dubious fortune to encounter the Children of God in Sweden, the Scientologist in London and the Krishnas in Edmonton and managed to emerge unscathed. Indeed, I found the above groups a good deal less insistent in marketing their products than evangelists like Oral Roberts, who merchandise Christianity on American TV networks.

However, let us assume that a gullible adolescent leaves home or campus and joins the Moonies. Stories abound that the new member is rapidly transformed into a "zombie" due to techniques of mass persuasion and a carbohydrate diet. In short, brainwashing. Such methods are not new. One could make out a case that Lent induces exactly the same form of spiritual awareness through the physical deprivation of bodily needs. Persuasion is common to any form of belief. If one were to place Peter Loughheed on an isolated farm for a long weekend, with ardent Marxists as his only company, then doubtless he would return to the Legislature with *Das Kapital* tucked under his arm.

Christian critics, for example Joel A. MacCollam claim that the successful deprogramming of a "cult" member proves that he/she was "programmed" in the first place. This is abject nonsense. Are we programmed to believe that the Earth revolves around the sun? The growth of new religions reflects but one thing; the dissatisfaction of the individual with his/her life. Whilst I feel sympathy for parents who have "lost" children to a "cult", it should be recognized that the act of joining signifies the child's total rejection of his/her upbringing. Thus to cite a truism that is often overlooked; deprogramming is, first and foremost, a device to restore peace of mind to the "failed" parent.

Reverend Clay concluded the symposium by saying that it is vital to provide education so that people are aware of the deceptions being perpetrated and can use their critical faculties. This is laudable, but transports us into the realms of subjectivity. What kind of education? And are we not deceived every day, by countless devices that we accept without question *simply because they are familiar to us?*

It would be the most supreme of all paradoxes if the Christian Church were to declare non-establishment religions to be heretical or to have them outlawed. For there, at the end of a long line of religious martyrs encompassing everyone from Daniel to Jan Hus, would stand the Reverend Moon, the Guru Mahara Ji, David Moses Berg, L. R. n Hubbard and all the rest of that motley crew.

Detente is appeasement

Your "Boycott Carter" editorial (*Gateway*, February 19, 1980) is reminiscent of Senator Joseph McCarthy. Your charges that President Carter and other people are warmongering and electioneering have as much foundation as Senator McCarthy's charges that many people were Communists.

Anyone who understands recent history knows that the anger of many people, at the Soviet Union, is justified. When you consider the way that the Soviet government tramples on the rights of its own citizens, and the general rule that people tend to think less of foreigners than of people in their own national group, the Soviet Communists must think little of the rest of the world. The Soviet Union has also conquered many nations which are weaker than itself. It has responded to our arms cut backs by a massive arms buildup.

During the 1970's, the Free

World acted in a manner similar to the way that Neville Chamberlain acted in the 1930's. We have allowed our armed forces to fall far behind the armed forces of the Soviet Union. We have ignored the atrocities of the Soviet Union. Worst of all, we have sold such countries as Vietnam, Cambodia, and Angola to the Soviet Union. Just as Detente (which was called "appeasement" during the 1930's) did not prevent World War II, it could not prevent World War III.

Detente has been a failure because of the actions of the Soviet Union. The anger of many people, including Jimmy Carter, is justified and Detente is the true path to World War III. If a war does occur, in spite of the end of Detente, it will be because we have allowed the Soviet Union to achieve a military superiority over us.

James P. Yushchysyn
Science I

Mediocrity triumphs again!

How can I refrain from comment when such lovely items slip into print? Like the president of the Ed Students' Association, going on record as admitting that literacy is desirable in a teacher. I would have thought it should be mandatory in a University student, let alone a teacher. In similar vein, an advert by the SU, seeking students to sit on GFC, implies (though without stating it — wise move!) that freshmen shouldn't have to sit English Competence exams. Why on earth not? Why do people have this love of mediocrity? Quixote came out in similar fashion, decrying the exam system. It isn't marvellous, I agree, but it is both quantifiable (and thus less prone to the examiner's whims than a form of subjective assessment), and, in many ways, more akin to real life. You sometimes have to make quick decisions on sparse information out there in the real world, and I don't want some slow-witted knucklehead pressing the button that brings Canada to a ... I would only agree that some exams could mimic reality more closely; it may be more important to know where facts can be found, rather than to memorise them. Exams are "sudden death", but so is life.

Onwards I read, and found that Housing and Food Services (*Services?* Ha!) is jacking up the rent in Lister Hall, when the place is already seriously under-

subscribed, and only 16% of its denizens would want to return. Why do I get a strange feeling that this plan won't work?

Various people have complained, I see, about Zimbabwean Robert Mugabe being described as a communist or extreme Marxist. Why? He is. He is proud of it. He boasts of it.

So why not say it?

And finally, to the writers of the classified ads and footnotes on the back page: why does Mensa meet in "a secret location on campus," and will someone please tell me what a Pina Colada is?

Richard Miller
Grad Studies

Three elections to win

Two minor corrections should be made to my 1970s story (*Gateway* Mar. 20).

Firstly, when I mentioned "the youth *Aufklarung* and "the youth imbroglio" of the sixties I was of course referring to the various shenanigans committed by the young people of that decade. Some gremlin at the *Gateway*, however, changed my words to "the young *Aufklarung* and "the young imbroglio"; thus concealing the tender age of the artists and firebrands responsible, and giving the impression that the rumbles were just beginning in 1970. On the contrary, as the story hinted, the youth movement was even at that date showing signs of senility.

Secondly, Rene Levesque's prophecy that the Pequistes would come to power in two elections did *not* come true, as I claimed. It actually took three

elections. I confess that I uttered the blatant falsehood deliberately, out of a sudden mischievous desire to test the memory and acuity of the minds here at the U of A. My own guess was that the critical faculties of *Gateway's* readers wouldn't be sharp enough to detect the untruth, even though I called attention to the prediction by calling it "cocky". The students would simply roll their eyeballs over the copy without anything registering indoors.

However, if 200 irate PoliSci students have already written in denouncing the error and labelling me an acetone-added science student who doesn't know his history from a hole in the ground, I may revise my opinion.

Jens Andersen
Science II

Pastor shocks reader

Either your negligence as an individual newspaper or your complicity in very questionable reportage and/or make-up as evidenced in your Tuesday (March 17) National Notes via the Canadian University Press appalls me. Whatever one's standpoint on religion, it is in extremely bad taste in my opinion for a university newspaper to carry such a story as your piece on the electrocution of the Stockholm pastor during a celebration of the baptism, irresponsibly headlined "Pastor gets a charge out of job."

How delightful it must be to be, as all at your newspaper are, a Canadian University Pressperson composing pretty much what one chooses without reference to either human compassion or taste, in the protected milieu of a campus newsroom! I'm no religious reactionary, but in this case I do believe you and your parent/associate organization have been offensive.

For example, my neighbour in the same basement is a Swede, a devoted and somewhat skilled craftsman with whom I sympathize both by choice and necessity, being myself a tuition-payer at present only through being a dues-payer of yore, a situation projected for this summer again. It would both sadden and anger me if he should read the pertinent *Gateway* and

may be forgiven. I see no reason to let your lack of upbringing and tact go by. Perhaps the national offices of the Pentecostal Church here and in Sweden would appreciate issues of the paper? I think I can find their addresses.

Roland C. Teape
Arts I

LETTERS

Letters to the *Gateway* should be a maximum of 250 words on any subject. Letters must be signed and should include faculty, year and phone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. All letters must be typed (or very neatly written). We reserve the right to edit for libel and length.

"Honor thy wife,
and everyone else's."



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